



**Berliner
Philharmoniker**

New Year's Eve Concert 2022

Berliner Philharmoniker

Kirill Petrenko conductor

Jonas Kaufmann tenor

31 December 2022, 16:00 (GMT)

Live from the Philharmonie Berlin

Giuseppe Verdi *La forza del destino*: Overture

Sergei Prokofiev *Romeo and Juliet* (excerpt)

Nino Rota *La strada*, Orchestral Suite (excerpts)

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky *Capriccio italien*, op. 45

and arias by **Verdi**, **Mascagni**, **Zandonai** and **Giordano**

16:00 supporting programme

16:30 concert (no intermission)

approx. **18:00** end

Live transmission – times may vary

Preview cinema season 2022/23

Fri, 16 June, 18:30 (BST)

Summer concert with Zubin Mehta and Yefim Bronfman
Schumann's Overture from *Genoveva*, Tchaikovsky's Fourth
Symphony and Bartók's Second Piano Concerto

berliner-philharmoniker.de/cinema

Programme

Italy – the country that gave birth to the art form of opera, where the world's most famous love story is set and which has often inspired composers of other countries as a dream destination – is the theme of today's programme. The Berliner Philharmoniker are ringing in the new year with music from and about Italy, written by five Italian composers and two Russians who loved the country.

The concert opens with the grand master of Italian opera:

Giuseppe Verdi. After the premiere of *Un ballo in maschera* (A Masked Ball) in 1858, he declared his operatic career over and became a farmer and member of parliament instead. When he received a commission to compose an opera for the Imperial Theatre in St Petersburg, however, he could not refuse. That was the origin of the opera *La forza del destino* (The Force of Destiny), in which the love between Donna Leonora, the daughter of a Spanish marchese, and Don Alvaro, who was vilified because of his mixed ancestry, takes many improbable turns.

The story of *Romeo and Juliet* is paid homage to with two works. The Berliner Philharmoniker will play an excerpt from **Sergei Prokofiev's** ballet suite of the same title. Jonas Kaufmann sings an aria from **Riccardo Zandonai's** opera *Giulietta e Romeo* – a rarity from the specifically Italian operatic genre of *verismo*, which sought to portray life more harshly, mercilessly and emotionally than previous generations of composers had dared.

The other two arias that Jonas Kaufmann has chosen for this programme also belong to the *verismo* movement. In **Umberto Giordano's** *Andrea Chénier*, the title character is a poet. At the time of the French Revolution, between his social commitment to the people and passionate love for an aristocrat, he gets caught in the machinery of Robespierre's reign of terror.

The concert concludes with two orchestral works. The first is by **Nino Rota** – in addition to Erich Wolfgang Korngold, perhaps the only composer to have written undisputed masterpieces in both film and concert music. He had a particularly fruitful collaboration with Federico Fellini, who portrayed an unvarnished Italy in his films. Their third joint work was *La strada* (1954): the story of a boorish showman and the small, headstrong Gelsomina. Ten years later, Rota was commissioned by La Scala in Milan to write a ballet suite on the same subject. The composer naturally used his soundtrack for the film *La strada* but also wrote new music, including the two movements heard today.

For **Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky**, Italy was love at second sight. Whether Venice, Florence, Naples or Rome, he found all these cities terrible during his first visits. The situation was different when he spent the winter of 1879/80 in Rome. He admired the art of Michelangelo and Raphael and was delighted by the Italian mentality. His fantasy for orchestra, entitled *Capriccio italien*, was intended as musical entertainment for the audience. The work begins with a military call; over solemn accompanying chords, a tune full of longing then unfolds. This dramatic introduction is followed by a canzona "alla napolitana", played by two oboes. The mood becomes more lively, with a folk dance and a tarantella. Tchaikovsky, who was actually deeply tied to his homeland, happily takes up traditional themes of another country in this work.

Malte Krasting